



North Dakota Department of Health

VENEZUELAN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS

Venezuelan equine encephalitis (VEE) virus is a mosquito-borne virus that is endemic in northern South America, Trinidad, Central America, Mexico and Florida.

Symptoms

Symptoms of VEE include sudden onset of illness with generalized malaise, spiking fevers, rigors, severe headache, photophobia and myalgias. Nausea, vomiting, cough, sore throat and diarrhea may follow. Full recovery takes one to two weeks.

Treatment

Because VEE is caused by a virus, antibiotics are not effective. The only treatment for someone infected with VEE is supportive care.

Vaccination/Prophylaxis

A live, attenuated vaccine is available as an investigational new drug. A second, formalin-inactivated, killed vaccine is available for boosting antibodies in those who initially received the live vaccine.

Bioterrorism Significance

VEE was weaponized by the United States in the 1950s and 1960s before the offensive biowarfare program was terminated; other countries have been or are suspected to have weaponized this agent. This virus could theoretically be produced in either a wet or dried form and potentially stabilized for weaponization.

For more information, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378.